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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 001744

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NSC FOR ZKHALILZAD, DSEDNEY, RHANSON  
DEPT FOR SA/PAB  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: NATO ISAF DELEGATION DISCUSSES SECURITY, AIRPORT  
OPERATIONS, RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT

Classified By: Ambassador Robert P. Finn for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) Post hosted June 19 a meeting with the visiting NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) delegation led by Deputy Secretary General for Peacekeeping Robert Serry. Representatives from NATO embassies in Kabul included the UK, Spanish, Turks, Danes, and Dutch; the Germans, Belgians and French also have embassies in Kabul but did not attend the meeting. Discussion focused on security in and around Kabul, necessary preparations for NATO's assumption of ISAF command, lead nation responsibility for Kabul International Airport, and potential Russian assistance to ISAF. End summary.

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SECURITY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR NATO ISAF  
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12. (C) The delegation expressed pleasant surprise regarding the efficiency of the Afghan MFA and Embassy in Brussels, which transmitted a NATO paper to Kabul, circulated it amongst other Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA) ministries, collected comments, and generated constructive feedback.

13. (C) Deputy Secretary General Serry and his staff inquired about security in Kabul and throughout the country, developments surrounding the October Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ), the summer 2004 elections, and security sector reforms including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and restructuring the Ministry of Defense. The discussion touched only briefly on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), as the delegation intended to address the issue separately in a subsequent meeting with Office of Military Cooperation Chief MG Karl Eikenberry.

14. (C) Offering the Embassy Kabul perspective on important steps in NATO's assumption of ISAF command, CDA and Poloffs stressed the need to immediately establish contact with key TISA ministries, especially the Ministry of Interior, UNAMA, and counterparts in CJTF-180. Embassy officers underscored the need to start planning for security in the Kabul area of responsibility in advance of the selection of CLJ delegates and the actual convening of the CLJ in October. Another significant point is the imperative of establishing a robust public relations/psychological operations program that targets Kabul's population. Emboffs suggested that it was not too late to start planning with relevant TISA officials for the Hajj; such planning should start at least three months beforehand, i.e. in September. ISAF's major role is cooperation at the Kabul airport, which funneled almost half of last year's 26,000 Hajjis, with particular focus on security around the airport and passenger assembly point in liaison with the Ministry of Interior.

15. (C) CDA and Poloffs also emphasized that NATO should consider the role of ISAF in the DDR process when it arrives in Kabul. Furthermore, ISAF's part in demilitarizing Kabul (i.e. removing Afghan Militia Forces in the capital, most of whom are Panjshiris loyal to Defense Minister Fahim) in accordance with the Bonn Agreement should be carefully thought out and strategized as TISA authorities and the international community muster the political will and a practical plan to carry out demilitarization.

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LEAD NATION FOR KABUL AIRPORT  
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16. (C) Responding to a query on a lead nation for Kabul's international airport, Serry stated that the Germans were ready to continue as lead nation provided there was common funding. (Comment: Since taking over the APOD (aerial point of departure - the military side of the combined civilian/military Kabul International Airport) from the Turks, the Germans have done a superb job; they have invested much in repairing bombed out buildings, paving a new heliport

area, expanding the apron, marshalling more fire and safety equipment, and installing many new prefabs for offices, barracks, and storehouses. Embassy recommends the Germans, with whom the Embassy has an excellent working relationship, remain in charge of the airport. End comment.)

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RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE OFFER TO NATO ISAF  
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17. (C) On the question of Russian interest in assisting NATO ISAF, Serry conveyed that the Alliance's Military Committee was studying the Russian offer, though NATO members were divided in opinion. Serry explained that Russian transit and overflight permissions would be useful, but that no Russian soldiers would be stationed with ISAF. Intelligence sharing via Tajikistan and possible Russian military airlift are also part of the offer, Serry said. He also mentioned that Secretary General Lord Robertson had phoned Karzai about the

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Russian offer of assistance and Karzai stated it was a very sensitive subject that would have to be considered carefully.

(Comment: Karzai, perhaps, in his first phone call with Robertson, was too polite to tell him outright, NOT a good idea. End comment.)

18. (C) Embassy officers held that Russian involvement in ISAF is politically infeasible at this time for the Karzai administration. With memories still fresh of the calamity inflicted on Afghanistan by the Soviets, most Afghans would not understand observable Russian participation in ISAF. Were they to become visibly involved, ISAF might face an additional security threat with irate Afghans targeting ISAF because of the Russian (Soviet) connection. Also, the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) would try to score public relations points against the Karzai government and Coalition for including the Russians.

19. (C) Deputy Secretary General Serry informed the group that President Karzai invited SG Robertson to Kabul on September 26, if Karzai himself is not attending the UN General Assembly at that time. He also conveyed that NATO invited Foreign Minister Abdullah and SRSG Brahimi to North Atlantic Council meetings on July 16 and 23, respectively. Finally, Serry offered that SG Robertson would not come to the August 12 ISAF change of command ceremony, which NATO wants to keep low-key.

110. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

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